

25X1 Draft:   
17 November 73

Dear Admiral:

Thank you for your letter of 25 September. As you know I have given COINS and information systems a good deal of thought and will be continuing to do so. I agree with the views of the Science Panel that we must delineate a community-wide concept and objectives, work out a community implementation plan, and establish an effective overall management structure.

25X1 I recognize that during the coming decade this broad subject of information flow will be critical to our whole intelligence business and will require considerable resources. This past spring, Mr. Schlesinger asked  to serve under DCI auspices and subject to IRAC review as Executive Agent for COINS development. I think this is desirable since DoD components are the principal users of COINS and the major technical complexities entailed in the further development of COINS involve the flow of information and the networks of communication between Defense agencies, the Services and the Commands worldwide.

I also recognize that COINS is potentially a community-wide mechanism, involving the State Department and CIA as well as DoD. Its ultimate value, and the resources we should make available for its further development, are to be measured by the contribution it can make to substantive intelligence production for real world users. In this respect, I have a continuing responsibility and concern for the content and the

availability of information through COINS and its effectiveness in improving the quality of our intelligence output. I am very conscious, also, that the advent of new overhead collection systems could have a considerable impact on our analytical methodologies and our community data bases and data flow requirements.

At the IRAC meeting on 5 November, a plan for improving the COINS communication network was approved. [ ] reported that a Technical Development Plan to upgrade the system will be completed in January 1974, and I understand that he is committed to report on this to the President's Board.

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In addition to keeping COINS under regular review in IRAC, I am now setting up a small ad hoc advisory mechanism to help establish my own focus on COINS concepts and objectives and the architecture appropriate thereto. On a day-to-day basis, we are working with [ ] people, utilizing our Intelligence Community Staff and the Intelligence Information Handling Committee (IHC). These steps should contribute to the elaboration of a total COINS system, in line with the suggestions of the Science Panel. As we move ahead this fall and winter, I will ensure that the President's Board and its Staff are in close contact with our on-going activities.

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Sincerely,

W. E. Colby